Rep. Mendel J. Davis (S.C.)
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C.

Rt. 12, Frederick, Md. 21701
8/12/78

Dear Congressman Davis,

Immediately after a member of your staff phoned my oldfriend Art Kevin, now of KVI, Seattle, Art phoned me to determine if I recall the names of the lawyer and investigator for the House assassins committee who had imposed upon his trust and thereby confronted him with a serious problem for any journalist. This related to the trick by which a subpoena was served on Lorain Eugene Hall, who I also knew well.

I regret that other work, which I was able to complete only this morning, prevented my writing you sooner. My best recollection is that the names are Klein and Fenton.

Only paranoia and incompetence can explain the great waste of public funds and improper procedures in the Kevin/Hall matter.

Hall's only interest was in protecting himself. For this, as he had earlier with me, he wanted to have with him an independent witness he could trust. The assassins committee people would not permit him to have any witness so he refused to be interviewed by them.

Bearing on Hall's willingness is this story that, as you will see, is of personal knowledge.

Hall had sent me word that he would like me to be present the day he was called. I was in the hearing room. He came up to me before the perfunctory questioning started. He asked me to get together with him and his counsel after it was over, as we did. In order to have evidence of his willingness and of the committe's self-defeating methods I looked around the room to identify reporters I know. The first I saw was George Lardner. I asked him if he would like to be with Hall and me. He said he would. When I asked Hall he agreed. I am certain that Lardner will confirm that Hall could not have been more open and informative, more responsive to all questions asked of him. And to him Lardner was a total stranger. Hall accepted him on my word that Lardner would observe accepted professional practises.

What the committee also did is contrive its second artifical situation in which a witness would take the Fifth. These two were its only public hearings. The result was phoney drama. With the other witness, the Mafia type, I know of no relevance to any proper investigation, unless there is a legislative mandate and legislative purpose in investigating conjectures and baseless rumors.

I have been watching this committee with ever-increasing uneasiness and some misgivings. To come to oppose it was not easy for me because to the best of my knowledge I am the first to have called for a Congressional investigation of the JFK

assassination. This is the conclusion of my first (Fe. 65) of six books on that crime and its investigation.

Before there was a committee those seeking to establish one restricted their contact to the lunatic fringe of those interested in the subject and to the most accomplished and successful of the self-seekers, Mark Lane. What led to the creation of the committee, what was virtually political blackmail by the black caucus, was Lane's total fabrication based on inept plagiarism.

From before it was organized this committee has preconceptions that should be reserved for conclusions following serious investigation. The preconceptions are not hidden. They are in the meager reports and the more plentiful public statements by Members and those speaking for the Members.

Each and every one of the representations and allegations made by or on behalf of this committee in an effort to perpetuate itself is frivolous, inaccurate, baseless and/or cribbed from the nutty stuff that has been alleged over the years. I, not the CIA as Lane and Mr. Fauntroy have alleged, am the source of the accurate newspaper exposures that drove the committee into star chamber proceedings of which you and other Members can know only what the committee elects to let you know. (This, of course, assumes truthfulness in what was represented. I doubt you were spoken to truthfully.)

As an illustration of this from the past there is the utter irresponsibility of the representations that led to continuing the committee, the Clifton Baird story. I assure you that prior to any of the representations being made the committee had proof of the falsity of the representations. It had the tape. Knowing the allegations against the FBI were false and knowing that if not false there was no relevance to the killing of Dr. King, the committee and its supporters nonetheless imposed upon the trust of the Congress and the people and got its life extended.

I have knowledge of its recent leaks. They relate to other irrelevancies and misrepresentations. The newest, of the Dallas police tape, comes from a minor newsletter of a year or more ago, not from the committee's lavish waste of money.

The committee represents that it has spent $900 on neutron activation analysis. You can't get near a reactor for that. I would guess that this was spent for an appraisal of those records I brought to light in my C.A.75-1996 and for which the consultant, Dr. Vincent P. Guinn, had already been paid for his opinion by the National Enquirer. It obtained copies for me for this purpose.

The committee, however, asks for no funds for spectrographic analysis, which remains essential in any serious investigation.

(You might want to look into the pasts of some of the known consultants. I know some who are good people but nuts on this subject, as their writings make clear.)

Not knowing your interest I do not take time for a recap of the irresponsible past. Records of this should be available to you in the committee's own clipping files or from the Library of Congress, as it is from my files if you would like one of your staff to have access to them.

If you are interested in the present perhaps I can suggest what can inform you without violating the incredible secrecy imposed upon you. (I am certain that this secrecy is intended to prevent exposure of the committee, not to protect the innocent, which in practise the committee does not do.)

I'll Have one of your staff phone me and tape record our conversation. Feed me names and I try to recall what is known, what is public knowledge. I am confident that virtually nothing is new and that almost all is not serious.

If I am correct, as the past indicates I am, this is a frightful demeaning of the Congress and another destruction of public confidence in our basic institutions.

I will not be attending the hearings. Monday I have to be in court in an FOIA case for King assassination records. (I am certain that I forced the FBI to process the records it provided to the committee. Some of these records show that the committee had a cozy relationshop with Lane while he was promoting a book and defending the FBI, which was innocent of his charges. This included turning an informer over to Lane.)

Other days I expect to be home and may listen to the broadcast.

From what is available I am certain that the committee is not conducting a serious investigation. Instead it is concentrating on the more irresponsible allegations to the end that it can report what is not worth any consideration, that these nutty allegations are not true. Whether or not this is proper for the Congress it is no substitution for what the people want and I suppose the Congress expected, a real investigation of actualities.

I would offer to go to Washington if my offer holds any interest for you and I can do this, but with some limitations. I am restricted to transportation provided by others or to a poor bus schedule. It is medically unwise for me to drive that distance in my own car.

You will find that I will be able to provide confirmation of anything I state.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg